



The WisDOT Connector *Express*

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WisDOT Secretary unveils national passenger rail initiative

Wisconsin DOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi has unveiled a long-term plan to expand passenger rail service throughout the country focused on connecting rapidly growing population corridors using greater train speeds and frequencies. Busalacchi, Chairman of the 30-member States for Passenger Rail Coalition, said the plan provides an outline of what passenger rail service in the U.S. could look like by 2050. As a member of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, Busalacchi is advocating a multi-modal vision to move people and commerce utilizing highways, waterways, public transit, and the untapped potential of passenger rail. More information on the plan (<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/rail-vision-2050.htm>) can be found on the WisDOT Web site.

Traffic safety initiative to run December 10 - 16

Over 100 law enforcement agencies throughout Wisconsin will mobilize for the “Booze & Belts” traffic safety effort from December 10th to the 16th. The high-visibility enforcement campaign is an effort to get more motorists to buckle up and drive sober during the Holiday season. Along with the enhanced enforcement, the Booze & Belts mobilization is backed by federally funded media messages to deter impaired driving and increase compliance with the state’s mandatory safety belt law.

November traffic fatalities down

Despite the fact that 54 people lost their lives on Wisconsin roadways last month, it ranks as one of the safest Novembers on record. Preliminary data indicates last month was the second-safest November since the end of World War II and tied with the years 1982, 1998, and 2000 for that distinction. The 54 deaths are 13 below the five-year average of 67. Through November, Wisconsin traffic crashes have claimed 694 lives - down 30 from the five-year average.

New Freedom/STRAP awards support public transportation in Wisconsin

Awards administered through WisDOT’s Bureau of Public Transit will enhance public transportation options in rural areas and services for disabled individuals. Governor Jim Doyle recently announced 17 grants totaling over \$2.3 million in federal funds to develop or expand public transportation options in rural areas via WisDOT’s Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance or STRAP program

(http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/opencms/export/nr/modules/news/news_0533.html_786229440.html). Also, the Governor announced over \$1 million in awards for 18 projects that will support public transportation services for disabled individuals. The New Freedom program grants (http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=3036) will be used to purchase new accessible vehicles, add new service routes for disabled passengers, and hire staff to coordinate services.

DBE annual conference and awards banquet set for December 13

DBE firms, prime contractors and other transportation stakeholders are invited to join WisDOT on December 13th for the 22nd annual DBE Workshop and Golden Shovel Awards ceremony at the Country Springs Hotel in Pewaukee. WisDOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi and Deputy Secretary Ruben Anthony, Jr. are scheduled to speak at the event. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Carl Grant, Hoefs-Bascom Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Grant has authored several publications on multicultural education and will speak on the history of civil rights in this nation in a presentation titled, “Civil Rights, Then and Now ...From Civil Rights to Silver Rights.” The registration fee is \$53, including lunch and the awards reception. For more

information or to register for the event, call Lakeia Cobbs at (414) 438-4583, or send an e-mail to lakeia.cobbs@dot.state.wi.us.

December 11 set aside to thank snowplow drivers

Governor Jim Doyle has proclaimed Tuesday, December 11th as Snowplow Driver Appreciation Day in Wisconsin. The proclamation urges everyone to reflect on the valuable service performed by snowplow drivers who work long hours during some of the worst driving conditions possible to ensure that the rest of us have access to jobs, schools, stores, medical services and recreational opportunities. Motorists are reminded to give snowplows plenty of room. Most crashes between vehicles and snowplows occur when a snowplow is rear ended or hit while being passed.

“Podcasts” another way WisDOT is disseminating transportation info

WisDOT is utilizing “podcasts” or Web-accessible audio files as another tool to disseminate information on transportation topics. The Division of Motor Vehicles offers audio files (<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/audio.htm>) on Wisconsin's graduated driver license law, driver license point system, and tips on how to schedule and take a road test. The newest podcast explains how to become an organ donor via one's driver license and features an 18-year old state resident who received a liver transplant two years ago.

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